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ABSTRACT

Strategies and techniques appropriate for providing vocational education and employment to learning-disabled adolescents and adults at both the secondary and postsecondary levels now exist. The first step involves formal and informal activities to appropriately identify learning disabled students. Formal assessments should be conducted by qualified personnel, informal assessments by vocational teachers in the classroom and shop. Vocational teachers need to be involved in the development of an Individualized Education Program and an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program. Finally, before instruction begins, students need an orientation to the school, teachers, and instructional environment. Ten main tasks to be accomplished in the vocational education of learning-disabled students are finding a bridge builder to provide a link between vocational education, special education, and other school and community agencies; teaching skills that are in demand; teaching survival skills; teaching how to compensate for reading and writing skill deficiencies; teaching how to solve problems through learning strategies; teaching the error and correction strategy; teaching in visual, auditory, and tactile modes; teaching skill transfer; and helping to develop self esteem. A final step in the vocational education of learning-disabled students is successful job placement. (Informal assessment instruments are appended.) (YLB)

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Vocational Education and Employment for Learning Disabled Students

by

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We can no longer claim the lack of technology and strategy as an excuse for not providing vocational education and employment services to learning disabled students. Strategies and techniques appropriate for working with the learning disabled student have been identified. The knowledge on how to work with and teach learning disabled adolescents and adults has greatly increased in recent years. This paper outlines an approach to providing vocational education and employment to learning disabled adolescents and adults at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. An in-depth inservice is usually required to bring vocational teachers abreast of the "State of the Art" in serving learning disabled students.

Where to Begin

Formal and informal activities to make certain that learning disabled students are appropriately identified is the first step. Learning disabled students cannot receive appropriate vocational education and their teachers cannot serve them until a knowledge of their needs and how to meet these needs is available. Therefore formal assessments by qualified personnel are necessary. Informal assessments to help the vocational teacher become familiar with the characteristics of specific learning disabled students can be performed in the classroom and shop. (Some informal assessment instruments are attached.)

Vocational teachers need to be involved in the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) if the learning disabled student is to receive vocational education. If the learning disabled student is a client of vocational rehabilitation and is enrolled in a secondary

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school,that student will have both an "Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program" (IWRP) and an IEP. The IEP and the IWRP development needs to be coordinated and involve the vocational teacher if the learning disabled student is to receive vocational education.

Prior to enrolling in vocational courses, or in a postsecondary school an orientation of the learning disabled student to the school, teachers and instructional environment is necessary. This is accomplished through orientation days, workshops and in some situations an intense orientation class prior to enrolling in the regular classroom and shop activities.

All of the above activities need to be accomplished before any instruction begins. There will be many actors in the delivery of vocational services to learning disabled students. Open communications need to be maintained among vocational teachers, special education teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, school administrators, school counselors, parents and employers and especially the learning disabled student.

An Approach to Vocational Education for Learning Disabled Students

There are at least ten major tasks to be accomplished in the vocational education of the learning disabled students. These tasks for the most part apply to both secondary and postsecondary situations. These ten tasks are listed below and details of each task will follow the list.

1. Find a Bridge Builder
2. Teach Skills in Demand
3. Teach Survival Skills
4. Teach How to Compensate
5. Teach How to Learn
6. Teach How to Solve Problems through Learning Strategies
7. Teach Error Correction
8. Teach in Different Modes
9. Teach Transfer of Skills
10. Help Develop Self Esteem

Find a Bridge Builder

A specific person needs to provide a linkage between vocational education, special education and other agencies in the school and community. This person might be a special needs coordinator at the postsecondary level.

The link could be a learning facilitator, a learning disabilities coordinator, special educator teacher or perhaps a guidance counselor. The Designated Vocational Instructor in Wisconsin or the Related Vocational Instructor in Georgia provides a very effective bridge between special education and vocational education. These instructors help handicapped students to enter vocational education programs and to function effectively in the classroom and shop.

The role of the "Bridge Builder" should be about the same regardless of the specific title which he or she may have. It will be difficult for anyone to fulfill the "Bridge Builder" role with any less than at least half time equivalent effort. The role of the "Bridge Builder" will be similar at both the secondary and postsecondary level. At the secondary level the "Bridge" is between the special and vocational education areas and at the postsecondary level the "Bridge" is between the learning disabled student and his or her needs and the vocational instructor. Seven functions of the "Bridge Builder" are listed below:

1. A link
   a. between Sp. Ed. and Voc. Ed.
   b. between L.D. and Voc. Ed.
2. Coordinate Resources
   a. intra school
   b. community
3. Promote teacher/student relationships
4. Provide support to Voc. Ed. teachers
5. Deal with L.D. students daily problems
6. Facilitate curriculum modification
7. Facilitate alternative tests, materials

An objective of the total approach to the vocational education of learning disabled students is to provide relevant instruction. Relevant instruction produces skills which are in demand. These are skills, if which acquired, will lead to employment, preferably in the learning disabled's home area. If the learning disabled student is "mobile" and can relocate, the selection of skill training and employment opportunities are enhanced.

Basic to the education of the learning disabled student are "Survival Skills". These skills are especially important to the learning disabled persons as they seek employment. Seven of these "Survival Skills" follow:

1. Get on right bus
2. Read want ads
3. Fill out tax forms
4. Listen to suggestions, criticisms
    a. from teachers
    b. from employers
5. Use the telephone
6. Interview for a job
7. Get along with peers, coworkers

How to Compensate

Learning disabled students with little if any reading and writing skills need some way to compensate for their deficiencies. Some methods which will assist in the compensation process are:

1. Tape record lectures, materials
2. Use the typewriter
3. Utilize word processors
4. Circumvent problems
5. Use study guides, alternative materials
6. Give alternative tests
7. Use computer assisted instruction

Teach How to Learn

Recent studies at the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities (IRLD) at the University of Kansas have involved adolescents and young adults in learning strategies activities. Although IRLD researchers did not stress vocational education in the studies the results have implications for vocational educators. How learning disabled students learn is important to every subject area. Vocational educators, along with their special education counterparts and their "Bridge Builder" need to cooperate in the utilization of learning strategy approaches. The overall IRLD method is outlined below:

1. Basic Skills - Fourth Grade or Above -
   Teach a learning strategy
2. Basic Skills Below Fourth Grade
    a. intense compensation skills
    b. intense skill remediation
3. Using Resource Room
    a. less severe LD - one class per day
    b. more severe LD - intense input over limited time

4. Lecture - Listen System

   a. teacher lectures - student listens
   b. very little feedback
   c. independent performance expected

5. LD Students Must

   a. recognize need for help
   b. take initiative in getting help

Helping the learning disabled student to learn a strategy for learning is a necessity. IRLD researchers attempted to teach one or more of the following learning strategies to learning disabled high school youth. Only one student out of 70 was unable to learn a strategy. These nine strategies follow.

1. Word Definition
2. Paraphrasing
3. Self Questioning
4. Multipass - attacking textbook chapters (Survey, Size Up, Sort Out)
5. Sentence Writing
6. Paragraph Organization
7. Error Monitoring
8. Listening
9. Note Taking

The IRLD staff at the University of Kansas also developed a method to learn the strategies. Points One to Nine below outline their method.

1. Determine Current Learning Habits
2. Describe New Learning Strategy
3. Model the Strategy
4. Verbally Rehearse Strategy
5. Practice Strategy (Controlled Reading Level)
6. Give Feedback
7. Practice Strategy (Vocational Materials)
8. Give Feedback
9. Test

Vocational educators can work with special educators and their "Bridge Builder" to help learning disabled vocational students acquire learning strategies. Some, but not all of the learning strategies are acquired naturally by regular students. Therefore even the non learning disabled students could benefit from learning strategy instruction. However,

most learning strategy instruction might be given to the learning disabled students in the resource room, special support classes or other settings.

Error Correction

Specific details of the strategy for error correction are provided at this point. The error correction strategy works and is a valuable tool for learning disabled vocational students to acquire. There are four tasks to be done to initiate the error correction strategy:

1. Read each sentence separately
2. Ask COPS questions
3. Circle errors, correct error
4. Ask for help

The COPS questions are then asked and the resulting activities carried out. The four COPS questions follow.

C Capitalize first word, proper names

O Overall appearance (spacing, legibility, indentation, neatness, complete sentences)

P Punctuation (commas, periods, ?)

S Spelling (are all words correctly spelled?)

Six additional steps were devised by the IRLD staff to round out the error monitoring strategy. They are:

1. Use every other line (rough draft)
2. Ask COPS questions
3. Circle errors, add correction
4. Ask for help
5. Make final draft
6. Re read final

Other Skills to be Learned

Learning disabled students have failed to learn some skills which many of us take for granted as being acquired by osmosis. These skills which are many times not acquired by learning disabled students are, thinking, speaking, listening, writing, reading and mathematical computations. Perhaps the most crucial of all skills to learn is how to listen. Learning disabled vocational students can be taught how to listen and vocational teachers can help teach this skill. Some of the points to consider when learning to listen are:

Gestures
Voices
Double Words
Pauses
Sequences
Major Points
Glossaries
Encourage Questions

An outline of points for vocational teachers to consider when helping learning disabled students with thinking, speaking, writing, reading and math skills are listed below.

Thinking Helps

Tell about a task
Observe and tell
Put together - take apart
Troubleshoot
Plan major events
Plan field trips
Solve a problem

Writing Helps

Write ideas
Draw pictures
Express ideas orally
Get classmates notes
Give oral exams
Develop note taking skill

Math Helps

Learn measurement units
Calculators
Visuals
Tactile materials
Coordinate math and vocational education

Speaking Helps

Enroll student in speech class
Demonstrate and explain
Think before speaking
Make tapes and listen
Provide separate study area

Reading Helps

Get a diagnosis
Use existing ability
Teach note taking
Audio tapes
Demonstrations
Glossary
Explain
Provide other ways

Teaching Modes

Teaching in the way which learning disabled students learn is a must for vocational teachers. The learning modes of students can be determined by formal assessment techniques. Informal assessment techniques can give a vocational instructor a fairly good idea of their students learning modes. (See attached sheets.) Listed below are some helps for developing instruction in the visual, auditory and tactile modes.

Teach in the Visual Mode

1. Develop mind pictures and vivid images
2. Make notes to self
3. Underline or highlight in color
4. Use charts or graphs
5. Provide actual materials
6. Use pointers, guides
7. Decongest materials

Teach in the Auditory Mode

1. Use audio cassettes
2. Listen to recorded texts
3. Say it, repeat it
4. Try to hear it
5. Eliminate visual interference
6. Avoid complex situations

Teach in the Tactile Mode

1. Provide hands on materials
2. Use body muscles, squeeze ball, toe tap
3. Study position changes, sit, stand, walk
4. Use metronome

Teach Skill Transfer

Skills which are learned in a secondary or postsecondary vocational setting can be transferred to other vocational situations and on to employment environments. The idea that skills needed in the classroom and shop are similar to those needed in the work place may not be readily apparent to the learning disabled student. Therefore, emphasis on the transfer of those skills which accompany the actual vocational skill needs to be made. As an example, a vocational graduate specializing in the repair and maintenance of bicycles could utilize the following skills in a job at a bicycle repair shop.

1. Questioning
2. Listening
3. Writing
4. Generalizing
5. Monitor errors
6. Understand charts, graphs, tasks
7. Read a manual

Self Esteem

Self esteem is a much sought after goal. Learning disabled students achieve self esteem in the same manner in which non learning disabled students achieve it. Self esteem is a condition of a genuine love and acceptance of self. Individuals must feel worthy. Goal setting and accomplishment are not relevant unless practiced in a condition of high self esteem.

Job Placement Success

An ultimate goal of vocational education for learning disabled students at secondary and postsecondary levels is the acquiring of employment and the achievement of meaningful careers. Assuming that we are successful in the vocational education and training of the learning disabled student, we have one further big step to accomplish. That step is helping the learning disabled person to get a job. Twelve tasks which will help achieve successful job placement are listed below.

1. Know LD student well
2. Help explore jobs
3. Visit work areas
4. Talk with employers - employees
5. Do not stereotype LD student
6. Be honest with employers
7. Be available to employer
8. Steady, persistant, honest, cooperative hardwork over time
9. Turnover is harmful
10. Help to enjoy, and anticipate success
11. Help establish meaningful career
12. Provide help for a long time

Summary

We need not wait any longer to develop and improve vocational education programs for learning disabled students. The strategies and techniques to teach the learning disabled students exists. Strategies for helping learning disabled students to learn exist. The type of support which vocational teachers need from a "Bridge Builder" is known. We know the roles which vocational and special education teachers need to fulfill. Finally, we know that learning disabled students can learn, can achieve, can find jobs and obtain meaningful careers.

This paper touches on some of the high points in the vocational education of learning disabled students. The concepts and the strategies discussed have been successfully implemented at secondary or postsecondary institutions. A wealth of good materials and ideas exist which can not be included in this paper due to space limitations. Vocational teachers and others need to utilize the existing knowledge and develop "State of the Art" instruction for learning disabled students.

Resources

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WHAT IS YOUR LEARNING STYLE?

List A

_____ 1. People say you have terrible handwriting.

_____ 2. You don't like silent filmstrips, pantomimes, or charades.

_____ 3. You would rather perform (or listen to) music than do (or view) art, and you would rather listen to a tape than look at a filmstrip.

_____ 4. You sometimes leave out words when writing, or sometimes you get words or letters backwards.

_____ 5. You can spell out loud better than when you have to write it down.

_____ 6. You remember things you talk about in class much better than things you have to read.

_____ 7. You dislike copying material from the blackboard or bulletin boards.

_____ 8. You like jokes or riddles better than cartoons or crossword puzzles.

_____ 9. You like games with lots of action or noise better than checkers or most other board games.

_____ 10. You understand better when you read aloud.

_____ 11. Sometimes you make math mistakes because you don't notice the sign or because you read the numbers or directions wrong.

_____ 12. It seems like you are the last one to notice something new - e.g. that the classroom was painted or that there is a new bulletin board display.

_____ 13. Map activities are just not your thing.

_____ 14. You must struggle to keep neat notes and records.

_____ 15. You use your fingers as a pointer when you read.

_____ 16. You frequently hum or whistle to yourself when you are working.

_____ 17. Sometimes your eyes just "bother" you, but your eye tests come out all right, or you have glasses which your eye doctor says are just right for you.

_____ 18. You hate to read from ditto sheets, especially blotty ones.

____ 19. "Matching test" questions are a problem to sort out (over and above not knowing some of the answers.)

____ 20. Sometimes when you read you mix up words that look similar (pill-pull, bale-hale).

____ SCORE: NUMBER ANSWERED YES

List B

____ 1. It seems like you always have to ask somebody to repeat what he or she just said.

____ 2. Sometimes you may find yourself "tuned out" - staring out the window maybe when you were really trying to pay attention to something.

____ 3. Often you know what you want to say, but you just can't think of the words. Sometimes you may even be accused of "talking with your hands", or calling something a "thingamajig" or a "whatyacallit."

____ 4. You have been in speech therapy at some time previously.

____ 5. You may have trouble understanding a person who is talking to you when you are unable to watch the persons face while he or she is speaking.

____ 6. You would rather receive directions in a demonstration format than in spoken form.

____ 7. When you watch TV or listen to the radio, someone is always asking you to turn it down.

____ 8. Your family says that you say, "huh?", too much.

____ 9. You would rather demonstrate how to do something than make a speech.

____ 10. Spoken words that sound similar (bell, bill, pin or pen) give you trouble. Sometimes you can't tell them apart.

____ 11. You have trouble remembering things unless you write them down.

____ 12. You like board games such as checkers better than listening games.

____ 13. Sometimes you make mistakes in speaking (like saying "he got expended from school").

____ 14. You like art work better than music.

____ 15. You have to go over most of the alphabet to remember whether, e,g,m comes before r.

_____ 16. You like it better when someone shows you what to do, rather than just telling you.

_____ 17. You can do a lot of things that are hard to explain with words - like fixing machines or doing macrame.

_____ 18. You usually answer questions with "yes" or "no" rather than with complete sentences.

_____ 19. Often you forget to give verbally received messages (such as telephone messages) to people unless you write them.

_____ 20. You are always drawing little pictures on the edges of your papers, or doodling on scratch paper.

_____ SCORE: NUMBER ANSWERED YES

If list A is very much higher than list B, the person in question could be considered an auditory learner. If list B is much higher, it indicates that the person in question might be considered a visual learner. If both lists are high, this persons best learning mode would probably be touching and doing.

The above material is drawn from Hayes, Marnell L. The Tune-in, Turned-on Book About Learning Problems. San Rafael, California: Academic Therapy Publications, 1974.

Tests for Three Types of Learning

Test Ground Rules

To give the test, you need:

1. A group of not more than 15 students as it is difficult to observe more than that at one time.
2. A list of the students' names which you can mark as you observe their reactions.
   V = Visual Learner
   A = Audio Learner
   K = Kinesthetic Learner

Reactions to watch for:

Visual Learners will usually close their eyes or look at the ceiling as they try to recall a visual picture.

Audio Learners will move their lips or whisper as they try to memorize.

Kinesthetic Learners will use their fingers to count off items or write in the air.

Conducting the Test

Start by telling your students that you are going to give them a test to determine what kind of learners they are: VISUAL, AUDIO, or KINESTHETIC.

This test consists of pretending that the students are going to the tool-room to get some tools for you. (The list should either include items appropriate to your class, or should be general, such as items to pick up at a grocery store.) First, you will write the list on the board, allowing the students to watch you, but they must not copy it. Next, you will give them the list orally. You will not write it and neither must they. Then, you will dictate the list to them orally and they will write it down.

After each presentation, you will ask your students to repeat the list to you if they wish. If a student is not able to repeat the list, tell him or her not to worry. The response to your request should be voluntary and the list does not have to be given back in order.

The specific test or tests in which the student has the highest recall is a reinforcement of his native way of learning. However, the symptoms are the prime indication.

First Presentation	List I
1. Write the list on the board while the students are watching. Do not let them write.	Hammer

First Presentation

List I

2. Allow students to view the list for approximately one minute while observing their reactions. Mark the symptoms after the students' names.

Symptoms:

VISUAL LEARNERS - Close their eyes or look at the ceiling. (V after name)

AUDIO LEARNERS - Move their lips or whisper, (A after name)

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS - Count the items on their fingers or write in the air. (K after name)

3. Erase the list.

4. Ask, "Who would like to repeat the items to me?"

5. Observe that the Visual Learners will volunteer first.

6. Call on them to recite ORALLY, one at a time, (Note that after a few students have recited, a few more timid hands will go up. These usually are AUDIO LEARNERS who have learned the list, not from seeing it, but from hearing the other students say the items.

7. As you notice a student's symptoms, make "V", "A" or "K" after the student's name.

Pliers

Crescent Wrench

Paint Brush

Screwdriver

Welding Rods

Level

Battery Tester

Second Presentation

List II

1. Dictate the list ORALLY (no writing by either teacher or students). Repeat the dictation a second time, pausing for a moment after each item.

2. OBSERVE that the VISUAL LEARNERS will close their eyes to try to SEE the items. The AUDIO LEARNERS will whisper each item as you dictate it. The KINESTHETIC LEARNERS will use their hands to mark off the number of items or will write in the air.

3. Ask, "Who would like to repeat the list?"

4. The audio learners will be the most eager to respond, although other students will try to repeat the items you have dictated.

5. Make appropriate notation of "V", "A" or "K" after the students' names as you notice their reactions.

Tape Measure

Square

Screwdriver

Chalk Line

Vise Grip

Level

Hammer

Pliers

Third Presentation

1. Tell the students to have pencil and paper ready to WRITE the list as you dictate it ORALLY. Tell them you will not count spelling. In fact, spell the words as you dictate.

2. After you have finished dictating the list, tell the students to rewrite the list, and to look at the one they have written from your dictation.

3. When they have finished rewriting the list, tell them to turn the paper over and WRITE THE LIST FROM MEMORY.

4. After they have finished, check to see which students have been able to repeat the list wholly or in part.

5. Notice that students who are unsuccessful in either the first or second presentation of the test are frequently the first ones finished.

List III

Chalk Line

Plumb Bob

Hand Saw

Tape Measure

Welding Rods

Power Drill

Pliers

Square

(The test may be repeated using numbers. Most students have a different form of recall for numbers than they have for words.)

Adapted from: Baxter, Wynn. Magnetic patterns of the English Language. Arlington, Virginia: Virtitas Publications, 1975.

Learning Disability Assessment Checklist for Teachers

Note the frequency with which students exhibit the following behaviors. Consistent behaviors such as these may indicate the presence of a learning disability.

Reading

1. Reading is mechanical, without expression
2. Guesses words based upon a few letters (the first, last letters)
3. Reads unevenly
4. Reads past mistakes without attempting to correct errors regardless of meaning
5. Reads very slowly, sounding out words while reading
6. Repeats words, loses place, goes back to find place
7. Unable to blend sounds together to get words
8. Moves lips during silent reading (subvocalizes)
9. Does not seem to understand what he or she has read, despite ability to read fluently
10. Comprehends what is read to him or her better than what he or she reads by self
11. Does not read willingly

Writing

1. Does not organize ideas into meaningful paragraphs
2. Punctuates incorrectly

Writing (cont.)

3. Does not write complete sentences
4. Reverses letters in a sentence; e.g., calm-clam; girl-gril; dirt-drit; saw-was
5. Spells phonetically and writes nonphonetic words incorrectly; e.g., thier, howse, eaite, etc.
6. Erases, crosses out, messes up work with scribbling when making corrections in written work
7. Does not write within lines on paper or indent paragraphs; follows incorrect form for writing
8. Written work deteriorates when under pressure of time testing or when work is long or demanding
9. Work shows poor placement on a page. Work (especially math or drawings) is spaced erratically on the paper
10. Avoids written work though highly verbal in class
11. Oral performance far exceeds written work

Speaking

1. Does not articulate clearly and understandably
2. Does not pronounce ending sounds in words correctly

- OVER -

Speaking (cont.)

3. Has tendency to confuse words he or she hears: 'profane' becomes 'propane', 'animal' becomes 'aminal', 'very' becomes 'revy'

4. Speaks quickly and nervously; thus is hard to follow or understand at times

5. Answers questions tangentially and has difficulty in getting to the point

6. Has difficulty finding the correct words when speaking

7. Interrupts self when speaking; distracts self and changes the subject; is fragmented and disorganized

Listening

1. Does not seem to listen to instructions

2. Does not attend to what is happening in class

3. Seems to misunderstand language

Math

1. Does not understand place value of numbers

2. Has difficulty in spatial concepts and measurement

3. Does not understand borrowing and carrying in math

4. Cannot remember math facts (addition and multiplication) and recall them automatically

5. Has difficulty with math problems that are written out in sentence form

Attitude

1. Does the student follow through on assigned work, or become disorganized and fail to complete assignments?

2. Does the learner often appear lethargic or apathetic, yawn, appear bored and without energy?

3. Does the student seem to feel inadequate or negative, and put self down?

4. Does he or she tend to be a loner?

5. Does the student handle frustration by acting out agressively?

6. Does the learner shy away from anything new academically, socially, athletically, for fear of failure?

7. Does the student have a shorter attention span than most of his or her peers?

8. Does the student claim not to need help? Avoid coming for help after school or during tutorials, for fear of appearing "stupid" or a "dummy"?

Adapted from Weiss, Helen Ginandes and Weiss, Martin, S. A survival manual; case studies and suggestions for the learning disabled teenager. Great Barington, Massachusetts, Treehouse Associates, 1976, pp. 68-71.

Santa Ana College
Santa Ana, California

Staff

One coordinator
One learning disabilities coordinator
Nine learning facilitators (tutors)
Forty student tutors (learning assistants)

Staff Activities

Student recruitment
Student evaluation
Individual educational plan
Individual tutoring (2-8 hours per week)
Daily monitoring
Post-testing
Regular class enrollment

Assistance to the Instructors

Give oral tests
Use class material in remedial instruction
Lend tape recorders to students
Communicate with instructors

Learning Skills Workshop

Length: Four weeks
Topic: One per session
Topics offered: Test anxiety
Exam preparation
Notetaking/listening
Textbook study
Time management

Test Administration Service

Self paced quizzes and exams
Make up exams
Comprehensive English language test
Psych 100 - self paced tests

- over -

Other Support Services

1. Classes:
   a) self adjustment
   b) swimming
   c) bowling
   d) individually planned exercise
   e) college learning skills
2. Job seeking skills lab
3. Job placement assistance
4. Nursing entrance exam tutoring